

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0537

INFO DOD WASHDC

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMCONSUL KARACHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 04453

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PFOR, MARR, PK, IN, IR

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH AZIZ AHMED, YUSUF PUCH

1. DURING 6-7 APRIL VISIT TO PAKISTAN DR. WAYNE WILCOX (EMB LONDON CULTURAL AFFAIRS OFFICER) HAD OPPORTUNITY DISCUSS IN SOME DETAIL SOUTH ASIAN DEVELOPMENTS WITH AZIZ AHMED AND YUSUF BUCH. DISTILLATE OF TALKS FOLLOWS.
 2. IN 45 MINUTE DISCUSSION WITH AHMED, WILCOX EXPLORED POSSIBLE IRAN SUPPORT FOR GOP. AHMED WAS BLEAK ON PROSPECTS, NOTING " WHAT DO THEY GET OUT OF IT?" MORE IMPORTANTLY, AHMED NOTED SHAH' S CONCERN WITH NOT ALIENATING USSR, AND DIFFICULTY OF TWO- FRONT SOVIET PRESSURE IN NORTH AND IN GULF. SHAH ALSO UNWILLING OFFEND INDIA.
 3. POW QUESTION EMERGED AT AHMED' S INITIATIVE. HE CONCERNED INDIA WANTS DELAY RELEASE FOR UNCLEAR REASONS, INDICATED WIDE NUMBER OF ACCEPTABLE BANGLADESH RECOGNITION - POW RELEASE COUPLED ALTERNATIVES. MUJIB SEEN AS INTRANSIGENT, AND CONSEQUENCES KAMAL HASSEINS APPOINTMENT AS YET UNCLEAR. PROBLEM REMAINS GOI POLICY; SEEN AS CONSTANTLY CHANGING CONDITIONS FOR RELEASE.
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4. GENERALLY SUPPORTED INDO- PAK ACCOMMODATION AS ONLY VIABLE ANSWER TO PAK VULNERABILITY IN LIGHT UNAVAILABILITY US, IRANIAN SUPPORT AND USSR HOSTILITY. CONCERN IS POSSIBLE INDIAN RETREAT FROM SIMLA UNDERSTANDING.

5. IN ONE HOUR DISCUSSION WITH BUCH, EXPLORED SAME QUESTIONS IN MORE DEPTH, CANDOR. BUCH REFLECTED GREAT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT EXTERNAL FORCES BEARING ON PAKISTAN, ESPECIALLY INDIAN POLICY " IN FLUX" AND USSR POLICY. SOVIETS SEEM ACTIVE THROUGH IRAQ ARMS SHIPMENTS, THROUGH INDIA, AND WITHIN PAKISTAN.

6. MOST ALARMING ASPECT ARREST OF OFFICERS SAID TO BE PLANNING ANTI- BHUTTO COUP WAS PRESENCE OF 2 EX- POWS SAID TO HAVE " HEROICALLY ESCAPED". PRESENT SURMISE IS THAT THEY WERE HELPED TO ESCAPE AFTER " BRAIN- WASHING". DOES THIS REFLECT CHANGED INDIAN POLICY ONCE SEEN TO FAVOR BHUTTO, WEST PAKISTAN UNITY? COULD THIS BRAIN- WASHING BE REASON GOI " HANGING- ON" TO POWS? WILL THIS BE MAJOR REGIME PROBLEM IN CIVIL- MILITARY RELATIONS AFTER POW RELEASE?

7. BUCH REFLECTED CONCERN AND CONFUSION WITH " SO MANY MAJOR FACTORS" - POWS AND INDIAN POLICY FLUX, SOVIET POLICY, IRAQI SUPPORT FOR SEPARATISTS IN PAKISTAN, ARMY DISSIDENTS. GOP, HE SAID, UNABLE TO SATISFY ITSELF WITH RELIABLE INFORMATION ON ANY OF THESE CRUCIAL MATTERS.

8. SOME CONCERN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN FOR HEALTH OF BHUTTO REGIME, POSSIBLE INDIAN AND SOVIET PREFERENCE WALI KHAN. OTHER CONCERN WAS WHETHER USSR AND GOI HAVE DECIDED ON FURTHER SPLIT UP OF WEST PAKISTAN REGARDLESS OF REGIME.

9. BUCH ECHOED AHMED ON POSSIBILITIES WITH IRAN, NOTING " NO TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE THE SAME PERSPECTIVE ON THINGS." NOTED THAT SHAH- HAHYA KHAN HIATUS FOLLOWED CLOSE AYUB- SHAH CONTACT; BHUTTO TRYING TO RESTORE DIALOGUE.

DISCUSSED INTERESTING REGIONAL DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTION OF BHUTTO REGIME. IN KARACHI, ALIENATION BOTH OF MUHAJIRS AND SINDHIS, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS BUT HAVING TO DO WITH COERCIVE METHODS. IN LAHORE, CONCERN MORE WITH POLICY, ESPECIALLY A " FINAL" LAND REFORM AND CONFUSION ABOUT TRUE INTENTIONS OF PPP. IN ISLAMABAD, MORE CONFIDENCE IN REGIME BUT SERIOUS POLITICIZATION, IN PARTISAN PARTY TERMS, OF ADMINIS- CONFIDENTIAL

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TRATION, UNIVERSITY MEDIA.

11. FOR ISLAMABAD. WILCOX GRATEFUL FOR HOSPITALITY,
EXCELLENT SUPPORT IN MAKING APPOINTMENTS.
SOHM.

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